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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Terry Goddard Vows to Continue Human Smuggling Prosecutions

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Oct. 18, 2006) Attorney General Terry Goddard said a lawsuit filed today will not deter his office's longstanding fight against human smuggling and coyotes operating in Arizona.

Goddard was responding to a lawsuit filed today in U.S. District Court in Phoenix that seeks to recover money transfers seized by the Attorney General's Office and restrict the scope of human smuggling investigations. The lawsuit was filed by three out-of-state individuals to recover money seized in Western Union wire transfers.

"Our investigations and seizures are helping us disrupt human smuggling, secure Arizona's border and make our neighborhoods safer," Goddard said.

For several years, the Attorney General's Office along with the Department of Public Safety and Phoenix Police Department have been conducting investigations of organized coyote organizations operating in Arizona. The Attorney General's Office has seized more than \$17 million in coyote assets and disrupted their operations. The information collected has led to more than a hundred arrests of coyotes and money launderers involved in human and drug smuggling operations in Arizona.

"This lawsuit is really about protecting corporate profits. If it is successful, our human smuggling investigations would be crippled, and Western Union and other money transmitters would continue to profit from illegal activity," Goddard said.

All money seizures by the Arizona Attorney General's Office of funds intended for coyotes (human smugglers) were made pursuant to court orders.

"Every effort has been made to prevent the seizure of any funds from people not involved in human smuggling. We have met with Arizona community organizations to be sure that anyone receiving legitimate money transfers would be able to claim their money," Goddard said.

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